

Madeleine Choir School 205 1st Avenue Salt Lake City, Utah 84103

May 16, 2007





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Madeleine Choir School 205 1st Avenue Salt Lake City, Utah 84103

May 16, 2007

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

Myron Cottam, Associate Superintendent

Brett Moulding, Director Curriculum and Instruction

Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist Curriculum and Instruction

Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, May 16, 2007, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Madeleine Choir School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal William Hambleton is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Madeleine Choir School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Madeleine Choir School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Hone: (601) 572 1600

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MADELEINE CHOIR SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Father Joseph Mayo	
1 2	Principal
	Assistant Principal/Third Grade Teacher

Support Staff

Monica Etzel	First Grade Aide
Lauren Schembari	Kindergarten Aide
Trish Wesson	
Jennifer Reed	
Miriam Kearns	Capital Campaign
Jerry Parkstone	
Jennifer Payne	=
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Carre Joyce	Lourdes Olsen	Sujin Yoon
Jamie Kmetzsch	Father Omar Ontiveros	2

MADELEINE CHOIR SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Compelled by the love of Christ, the Madeleine Choir School inspires students to grow personally, intellectually, and morally while furthering the liturgical life of the Catholic Church through the choral tradition of the Christian faith.

BELIEF STATEMENTS (EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES)

- All students are capable of learning, and they learn best in a safe and secure environment.
- All students are to recognize and appreciate the qualities which make them unique.
- All students worship together in a Catholic faith community through the study of Catholic doctrine, participation in the Sacraments, and daily prayer.
- All students are held to high, positive expectations based on their individual talents and are responsible for developing themselves and serving others.
- All students are educated primarily by their parents, working in collaboration with teachers to help students achieve a feeling of competence, which enables them to master more difficult challenges and experiences.

MOTTO

Christ's love compels us.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Edy McGee, Butler Elementary School, Jordan School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Kim Baker, West Hills Middle School, Jordan School District

Kathleen Hood, Kearns-St. Ann School, Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City

Barbara Springer, South Jordan Middle School, Jordan School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

MADELEINE CHOIR SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

The Madeleine Choir School is a Roman Catholic choir school in the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, Utah, serving 216 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The school will complete its eleventh year of operation on June 11, 2007.

The precursor of the Choir School was the children's choir of the Cathedral of the Madeleine. The director of Liturgy and Worship of the Cathedral of the Madeleine served as the Choir Master and, motivated to amplify the excellence of the choir, inspired the community to support the opening of a school that would be devoted to the choral tradition of the Christian faith and the liturgical life of the Catholic Church.

The school opened in 1996 in the basement of the Cathedral, serving students in fourth through eighth grades. In 2002, through the generosity of friends and benefactors, the Madeleine Choir School purchased the present campus and opened lower grades, expanding the school to a kindergarten-eighth grade educational institution.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

As identified in the profile, the Choir School has a dual purpose. First, it exists to promote "the choral tradition of the Christian faith and the liturgical life of the Catholic School." Additionally, it provides a strong academic opportunity for students who attend. That the school is accomplishing both of these purposes is evidenced by the service this internationally renowned choir gives to the Cathedral of the Madeleine, the Catholic community, and cities in Utah and throughout the world. The school is also fulfilling its academic goal. Second through eighth grade students at the school take the SAT. The SAT results reveal that all grades score above the 50th percentile, the national average. Furthermore, students scored substantially above the national average on the majority of the subtests. Student scores in all areas of the SAT increase as the children advance from grade to grade. The scores for seventh and eighth grade students are between the 70th and 90th percentile on all subtests. One concern that the Visiting Team had was that the data were not disaggregated. However, in visiting with the administration, the Visiting Team learned that struggling students in the primary grades are identified and helped through differentiated instruction and/or involvement in the STAR reading program. A vice principal was hired whose primary function is to identify and help these students.

The school's analysis of its profile revealed that, although 78 percent of the school population is Caucasian, 22 percent of students are minorities, including

Asian, African, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander as well as those of mixed ethnicity. There are an equal number of male and female students, and 73 percent of the student body is Catholic. Another fact revealed in the school profile is that 49 percent of families have an annual income higher than \$120,000.

Because of the unique service rendered by the choir, teachers must be flexible. The Visiting Team found that the teachers were flexible with their assignments and academic requirements when the Choir was heavily involved in rehearsals or performances, yet the high academic expectations were never compromised.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The school profile provides achievement data for each grade. However, the information is not disaggregated, making it difficult to know who is learning and who is not. In conversations with the administration, it became evident that the administration knows who is struggling and who is not, but it would have helped the Visiting Team to have had that information in the self-study. Also, although the school is doing much to promote learning, none of this information was included in the school profile.

The musical aspects of the Choir School are unique. Choir members maintain a rigorous rehearsal and performance schedule in addition to carrying a full academic load. Information about these musical obligations and how the school maintains a balance between the performance and academic demands needs to be included in the self-study.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Collect and use behavior and attendance data over time, and include it in the school profile.
- Much work has been done to identify students who are struggling. Include this information in the school profile.
- Disaggregate data by ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic level, etc.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The self-study process is not thoroughly understood at the Madeleine Choir School. As a result, collaboration was limited. Although the school has very involved parents, their role is limited to supporting the programs at the school that are already established. Parents were not directly involved in the self-study process. Similarly, although the board of the school approved the DRSLs, they did not collaborate with other stakeholders in their creation.

The school did not do a systemic analysis (focus groups) or a departmental/grade level analysis. The Visiting Team recommends that the school organize focus groups with representation from all stakeholder groups, and then obtain the rubrics prepared by the National Study of School Evaluation to analyze its systemic effectiveness. The Visiting Team also recommends that the school use the eleven Essential Questions (listed below) to analyze its instructional and organizational effectiveness.

- 1. How are the department's curriculum and instructional strategies aligned with the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?
- 2. How does each course offering align with the state's Core Curriculum, which prescribes content and course-specific intended learning outcomes?
- 3. To what extent does the department utilize a variety of assessments to monitor student achievement and adjust instructional practices?
- 4. How does the department collaborate with other departments to create integrated, relevant, and authentic learning opportunities for students?
- 5. To what extent do department members utilize inclusionary teaching strategies to meet the needs of **all** students, (ESL, special education, gifted, etc.)?
- 6. To what degree are the department's policies, operational procedures, and allocation and use of resources aligned with the educational agenda of the school?
- 7. How does the department collaborate and engage in ongoing professional growth for the purpose of improving student performance?
- 8. How do students have access to additional support beyond the classroom?
- 9. How do students have access to and utilize technology as a regular part of the instructional program?
- 10. How does current staff and certification meet current program needs?
- 11. How is the department collectively addressing the school's current improvement goals?

Areas of Strength:

With respect to these questions, what are the department's strengths? What evidence/data validates these findings?

Recommendations for Growth:

With respect to these questions, what are the major areas for departmental growth? What evidence/data validates these findings?

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The Choir School has a highly accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. While the written document produced by the school does not reveal the depth of the school's understanding about its strengths and weaknesses, this information came out very strongly in the conversations the Visiting Team had with the stakeholders of the school. The Visiting Team recommends that the school community expand its understanding of its strengths and weaknesses by incorporating additional data they have collected on struggling students, reading performance, etc. as part of the self-study.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The Madeleine Choir School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

- 1. Students will develop a civic conscience and contribute to their global community while being grounded in Christian values.
- 2. Students will preserve, further, and appreciate the choral tradition in the life of the Roman Catholic Church.
- 3. Students will acquire and demonstrate complex thinking skills through participation in a rigorous academic curriculum.
- 4. Students will communicate effectively through reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?
 - Consensus for the school's mission statement, shared vision, beliefs, and goals was achieved through meetings of parent groups, faculty and staff discussion, and meetings with church and academic administration. The Visiting Team found evidence of a collaborative effort to arrive at consensus that involved all stakeholders
- b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

The school has a defined set of educational objectives that reflect the commitment of the administration, faculty, and staff that support the Catholic educational philosophy and student achievement. The belief and educational objectives reflect the school's dedication to an appropriate education for all grades. The statements provide the foundation for helping students achieve success in a changing world.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The school's DRSLs (e.g., develop a civic conscience and contribute to the global community, continue the choral tradition, demonstrate complex thinking skills, and communicate effectively) are aligned to the mission and belief statements that drove the selection and articulation of the school's desired results for student learning.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure that the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The Diocese of Salt Lake City determines standards for the Madeleine Choir School. There are strong indications that Utah Core Curriculum underpins most of their curriculum. The quality of the school's curriculum is clearly reflected by the students' SAT scores. The staff is unique because there are only eight grades in the school, and each grade has a different teacher/teachers. As a result, there could be more emphasis on vertical teaming among the teachers, with each grade level teacher sharing what he/she expects of students and how to ensure the effective implementation and articulation of the curriculum in the future. The Madeleine Choir School is a performing arts school in the rich tradition of choral music, so the curriculum has to be flexible enough to provide students with strong academic foundations, but also take into consideration the extracurricular demands on children who perform not only locally, but also worldwide.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

The DRSLs are clearly printed in each classroom. While there has been positive and collaborative support for the accreditation process, the Madeleine Choir School will need to bring the teachers together to discuss and take ownership of curriculum development. Clearly, the DRSLs are being met but do not yet adequately drive curriculum development. For instance, civic conscience through Christian values is of monumental importance among the entire staff. They work with the children to provide opportunities for service to others while maintaining

a high standard of behavior in classrooms. The choral tradition is manifest in every facet of the school and even includes a collegium for students who are not in the school's choir. Thus, the teachers go out of their way to establish curricula for both the performers and those who are integral to the program yet not members of the choir. "Complex Thinking" is evident in every classroom. Higher-order critical thinking goes hand in hand with the students' music training and high standards of academic performance. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are developed through "Effective Communication" in each and every classroom. Alignment is necessary, however, and more collaboration time would be an effective strategy to pull the excellence evidenced by each teacher together as a school.

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

The professional staff has designed and implemented learning experiences that actively engage students. Teachers at the Madeleine Choir School use a variety of methods to ensure that all students are on task and engaged in learning. There is a highly effective balance among teacher instruction, whole class involvement, small group work, hands-on activities, and individual work. Students ask questions for clarification, feel confident about offering insights that extend the application of the concept, and are excited about learning.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

Teachers are aware of the multiple learning styles of their students. Consequently, they use a variety of instructional strategies to address student needs. They are adept at planning and implementing a variety of strategies during each class period. Furthermore, classes are structured so that the needs of visual, aural, musical, kinesthetic, etc. learners are addressed. The faculty is willing to try a variety of interventions to achieve student success.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

A half-time vice principal position was established this year at the Madeleine Choir School to address interventions for struggling students. The STAR reading program began in December and is helping struggling readers. Additionally, the administration works closely with Salt Lake District in identifying students with special needs and offering additional services.

Seventh and eighth grade students have ability-based mathematics classes, with twelve to fifteen students per class.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The Madeline Choir School uses the SAT to chart student academic progress for second through eighth grades on an annual basis, and uses the National Catholic Education Association's Assessment of Catholic Religious Education to determine student knowledge of the catechism of the Catholic Church. Because the Diocese of Salt Lake City does not publish scores, student assessment data are used by the administration and teachers primarily as "indicators." Significant student achievement and growth are reflected in the summary scores for the SAT Basic Battery and Complete Battery. The Madeleine Choir School has used the scores to identify not only significant and impressive scores that are considerably above the national norm, but also to identify students who are struggling in some of their academic areas. By sixth grade, most of the scores that are in the below average range on the SAT have been remedied. Students in the upper grades reflect significant improvement. As a result of this year's scores for the sencond through fifth grades, the Madeleine Choir School assistant principal is spearheading programs to assist students in three key areas: basic skill development, reading strategies (using the STAR program), and peer tutoring.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

Teachers develop their own assessments in their individual classrooms. While there are yearly class-level meetings among educators in the Catholic School System, there is no standard for assessment comparable to public schools. They do not need to meet any annual progress goals, but are motivated to implement assessments necessary for them to continue their high standard of performance on the SAT and ACRE. The Madeleine Choir School uses various rubrics comparable to those used by the NSSE to establish the importance and relevance of their DRSLs within the frame of the school.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

Assessments are developed at the discretion of individual teachers, each of whom is professional and anxious to meet the needs of his/her students. The design and development is evident in the progressive improvement of the SAT scores from the second through eighth grades. The Madeleine Choir School was totally forthcoming with all of its SAT scores and clearly supports and advocates fair

grading practices that motivate its students to excel in the school's high performance standards.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The school leadership team uses several strategies to create a strong academic learning climate. Hiring teachers who are supportive of the mission of the school is one important way the leadership team promotes quality instruction and fosters a climate conducive to teaching and learning. In most cases, before an individual is hired to teach at the Choir School, the leadership team observes the candidate in a teaching setting.

Another way the leadership team fosters an academic environment is recognizing that struggling students need additional support. Consequently, the leadership team brought a half-time vice principal on board whose primary concern is to work with students who need additional academic support.

Yet another way the leadership team promotes teaching and learning is by setting high benchmarks and standards for the students. Then the leadership team works with teachers to help them understand the necessity of their being flexible in order to allow the school to balance the demands of its strong academic program and its rigorous rehearsal and performance schedule.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision-making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

The leadership team takes a holistic approach when making decisions about students and programs. They use the data from the yearly SATs to understand where there are weaknesses in their programs, and then use appropriate interventions. The hiring of a vice principal who oversees student academic support is an example of how they use data effectively. The vice principal works collaboratively with teachers in making decisions about student interventions.

c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?

Although student achievement data was not disaggregated in the self-study book, from interviews with the leadership team it is evident that they know who is learning and who is not. In addition to SAT scores, the leadership team conducts classroom observations and performs teacher evaluations (using the Diocesan instrument) to aid in monitoring student progress. Additionally, the parents of

students who are struggling are involved in developing a plan to facilitate their children's academic progress. Also, a student education plan is developed for each student.

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

The leadership team, along with the School Board, are wise stewards of all the resources of the school. It is clear that the school administrators are student advocates and work tirelessly to ensure student success. Policies and practices align with the mission and beliefs of the school. Furthermore, they are designed to maximize opportunities for musical as well as academic success.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

Resources have been aligned to the goals of the school and student progress. The school has a process in place to ensure that funds are used appropriately. The principal of the school reports to the Rector of the Cathedral and also works with the Finance Committee. Fundraising is a critical responsibility of the leadership team. In order to raise the funds necessary to run the school, there is a Development Office associated with the school. The leadership team and School Board work with the development office in fundraising efforts. Furthermore, administrators and the School Board have made a conscious effort to assure that funds are allocated in a manner that is fair and will help the school further its mission, beliefs, and DRSLs.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The Visiting Team commends the leadership team in this area. The very existence of the school depends on the leadership team empowering the school community and gaining their trust and commitment. The teachers, parents, and administrators all demand excellence from the students and from each other. Furthermore, the different stakeholder groups support all efforts to make this happen. The leadership team praises the students and faculty for the hard work they do and for the successes they experience. It is obvious that the leadership team has involved all stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team was impressed by the sense of community that exists among the staff and students. The Madeleine Choir School is dedicated to promoting positive and productive relationships among students, teachers, and administrators. The staff shows great sensitivity to the developmental needs of the students and is committed to helping them. For example, the school offers several programs for students with diverse needs, the STAR reading program, smaller class size, athletics, tutoring, student government programs, and choir activities. These all support the school mission and DRSLs by providing opportunities for students to celebrate their talent, do community service, and find self-direction. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff continue its collaborative efforts within departments and other schools.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The Madeleine Choir School is working constantly to improve communication with the community. The staff reaches out to parents and families to engage them as partners in the learning process through a variety of programs: Home and School Association (HAS), monthly School Board meetings, choir performances, community service, fundraisers, PowerSchool, and newsletters.

A survey was given to parents, students, and faculty and staff members in 2006. Data was compiled in the following areas: Parent Support, Teacher Excellence, Student Commitment, School Leadership, Instructional Quality, Resource Management, and School Safety. The main concerns found by the survey were issues of resource management and school safety.

The Visiting Team recommends that the staff continue its efforts to assist struggling students and to use data to guide decisions within the school. The Visiting Team also recommends the continuing use of volunteers in the decision-making efforts in the school.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The school builds skills and focuses on improvement. The administration, faculty, and staff attend a spiritual retreat each year before school begins in the fall, which focuses on their religious goal. All teachers take one or two BER workshops each year that are paid for by the school and that focus on teacher improvement goals. A Diocesan focus on literacy instruction this year has led the Madeleine Choir School to also focus on literacy. Teachers are encouraged to pursue master's degrees, and the school makes accommodations to support these teachers.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The Madeleine Choir School fosters a school climate that focuses on student achievement. A highly enthusiastic and dedicated administration and faculty, coupled with an active School Board and Home and School Association, address student learning issues and concerns. There is an atmosphere of collegiality and a climate conducive to continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS

The Madeleine Choir School is in compliance with all NAAS standards for accreditation. Over the years, the school has worked diligently to maintain the accreditation standards as outlined by the NAAS and the Utah State Office of Education. The school's curriculum is aligned with the Utah State Core Curriculum. All professional educators are properly licensed and endorsed for their particular assignments, in accordance with Utah state requirements. The school is financially viable and ethical in its business practices. The Madeleine Choir School has created and maintained a culture of continuous improvement that supports student achievement.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

There is no alignment of the action plan with the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The only aspect of the action plan involving student learning is the school's desire to open a pre-kindergarten program. The rest of the action plan addresses financial concerns. This lack of focus on student learning was an area of great concern to the Visiting Team. The action plan must be rewritten to address student learning. Furthermore, it must be driven by the DRSLs.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

Except for the school's desire to open a pre-kindergarten program, the action plan as it now exists involves only financial matters. There is commitment from all stakeholders to raise the necessary funds to accomplish the goals addressed in this area. However, a new action plan that is driven by the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs of the school must be written. The Visiting Team felt that, because there is such a strong desire for the school to be successful, once the new action plan is written there will be commitment to it.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school wide action plan appear to be?

The school has already developed a rubric for the DRSLs. The Visiting Team recommends that the school rewrite the action plan, aligning it to the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs of the school. Further, the Visiting Team also recommends that the action plan include assessment strategies to ensure actualization of outcomes.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Madeleine Choir School has created a climate that is positive, professional, and welcoming.
- The Choir School has attained a balance among the academic, religious, and musical aspects of the school.
- The DRSLs are thoughtful and well developed.
- There is high degree of commitment and community involvement from administration, staff, faculty, parents, and students.
- The Choir School has identified students who are struggling and addressed their needs by implementing reading strategies, skill development, peer tutoring, and differentiated instruction.

Recommendations:

- The action plan must be driven by DRSLs and relate more directly to student learning.
- The self-study must portray all aspects of the school's mission (e.g., religious, choral, academic, and civic consciousness).
- The self-study should include a grade level/departmental analysis and a focus group analysis.
- There must be more alignment among the mission, educational objectives, and action plan.